

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

As customers of DIRECTV and residents of rural Idaho, we are writing to urge you to support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. We believe the merger will increase video and broadband choices for consumers like us.

The combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable operators by being able to offer us local TV channels via satellite in our market areas, which we currently do not receive. This is a hardship for rural residents in mountainous terrain. IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS WE HAVE NO ACCESS TO LOCAL WEATHER BULLETINS, ROAD INFORMATION OR OTHER EMERGENCY BROADCASTS. Our area is subject to extreme winds, snow, and flooding. Since we live on the main north/south artery through Idaho, current road information can literally save lives if received in a timely manner. There are three families on this property who are served by DirectTV and receive no local broadcasting. Often we cannot get radio broadcasts, either, due to the terrain in which we live. In the past, rural people like us have chosen to live in areas such as this even though we could not receive what others regard as vital information. This whistling in the dark because of 'the way it is' need no longer be, should this merger go through.

Broadband access to the Internet is not available to us at this time. If the merger is approved, the new company will be able to provide us with affordable high-speed Internet access via satellite along with the other 40 million American households who do not have affordable high-speed Internet access now.

We appreciate your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Thousand Springs Ranch  
1860 Highway 95  
Weiser, ID 83672